



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

# BULLETIN OF THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

VOLUME II

NEW YORK, OCTOBER, 1907

NUMBER 10

## A PIECE OF EGYPTIAN TAPESTRY



AMONG the examples of Egyptian textiles belonging to the Museum collections, a part of which were received as a gift from Mr. George F. Baker, in 1890, is a piece of

tapestry measuring  $10 \times 9\frac{1}{2}$  inches and representing a woman holding a chiton in her upraised hands. The textile dates from the second or third century of our era. It has been examined by Mr. Paul J. Baumgarten, who recognized that it was similar in technique to the Gobelin work of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the principal difference being that the warp is of linen instead of the modern cotton or wool thread. The whole of the weft is in wool, unlike the medieval and modern, where the "high lights" are generally in silk.

The panel is woven with the warp and the subject running the same way, in order to save work as much as possible on the horizontal lines in the design. Where changes of color occur on vertical lines, to avoid long slits—as in large buttonholes—in unimportant places, the two colors are zigzagged; but where a sharp deviation is required, a slit was woven open and afterwards joined up by sewing.

There is a curious similarity in the number of warp threads to the linear inch, the number being twenty-two—the modern standard for fine figure work. The colors

are all apparently as brilliant as when the piece was woven, possibly seventeen hundred years back, but the high light of the green dress is yellow, the shading being indigo blue. This is a common process in Gothic tapestries, but Mr. Baumgarten is of the opinion that, originally, the high light was a pale green, the blue of which is entirely faded out. This is quite reasonable, but does not account for the common use of yellow as a high light in green drapery of the primitive painters.

Although the Museum only possesses a single portrait piece of this Egyptian Gobelin, it is not uncommon. Several similar figure panels are in the South Kensington Museum; also portions of curtains, or wall hangings, which are even more like the European Gothic work.

The collection from which this panel is selected was made about twenty years back by Emil Brugsch, Bey, of the Egyptian Museum, Cairo. He had extraordinary facilities in acquiring the then little cared for finds of textiles recovered from early Christian tombs at Akmin, the site of the ancient Panopolis.

Unfortunately, very few entire garments were preserved. They were generally of linen, pale buff in color, and ornamented with bands and panels of embroidery, or tapestry, woven in with the weaving of the plain stuff. The actual excavators—generally Arab fellahs—often divided each find between themselves, tearing out the ornamental portion and throwing the rest away.

In the best examples, the whole garment was of cruciform shape, made at a single weaving, and, although ready to wear, yet, like the garment of our Lord, was "woven without seam." The Brugsch

collection contains several of these garments, and a large number of the bands, or "clavi," some of which seem to have been transferred from earlier to later tunics.

Several early bishops of the Church mention and deprecate the extravagance of dress amongst the early Christians. Bishop Astere complains of the representation of beasts, birds and fishes woven into their dress, and St. Jerome in the fourth century reproves Christians for making their "linen tunics into costly robes."

It is a little hard to determine whether the piece, here illustrated, was made for Pagan or Christian use. The nimbus would lead us to infer the latter, although there is a similar panel in the South Kensington Museum representing Hermes and distinctly pagan. A larger fragmentary panel representing two flying angels supporting a wreathed medallion containing the A. W. monogram is quite similar in technique and coloring.

C. P. C.



TAPESTRY.—COPTIC, II-III CENTURY, A. D.